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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [SCUL](#) [SP](#) [VZ](#)
SUBJECT: VENEZUELAN RCTV OWNER MARCEL GRANIER IN SPAIN

REF: A. MADRID 677

[1](#)B. SECSTATE 52361

Classified By: DCM Hugo Llorens for reasons 1.4 (b) & (d).

[1](#)1. (C) As described in ref A, DCM talked with MFA Secretary of State for Latin America Trinidad Jimenez on April 12 about the possibility that the GOS would act discreetly to encourage Hugo Chavez not to close RCTV. Based on that conversation, Jimenez, who was aware and concerned about the closure, helped to arrange a meeting for RCTV owner Marcel Granier with National Security Adviser Carles Casajuana.

[1](#)2. (C) On April 17, Ambassador and DCM met with Granier. He said that he had had a very successful series of meetings in Madrid that included Casajuana, Director General for Latin American Javier Sandomingo, and editors of Spain's major newspapers (El Pais, ABC, El Mundo and others). Granier thanked Ambassador and DCM for helping facilitate the sessions with Casajuana and Sandomingo. Granier said that, without making any commitments, Casajuana asked him several very thoughtful questions. The Ambassador said that the meeting was important since Casajuana is very close to President Zapatero. Granier said that the meeting with Sandomingo went well and that he also showed interest in his case, although less so than Casajuana. Embassy will follow-up with Jimenez using ref B points and ask her if Spain was planning any next steps in support of RCTV.

[1](#)3. (C) Granier had an extensive discussion with the Ambassador on the prospects of the King being willing to involve himself in the case, but concluded that it was highly unlikely that the King would approach Chavez directly on the matter since the government and bureaucracy were unlikely to suggest this and the King was unlikely to get out front of his government and bureaucracy. The Ambassador did advise Granier that informing the King of RCTV's situation and the problem of press freedom in Venezuela in general could be important. The Ambassador suggested several possible conduits to get a message to the King.

[1](#)4. (C) Granier confided that some people in Caracas had advised him to hold a major public rally in support of the station. He said that in a phone conversation Enrique Iglesias advised a lower profile approach to Chavez for the moment. Granier is also in touch with Felipe Gonzalez but noted that Gonzalez had recently entered a clinic for a medical procedure and was unable to see him. The Ambassador noted the considerable influence that Gonzalez retains in Spain and suggested that a get well call would provide a chance to brief him on his efforts in Europe. The Ambassador also suggested that Granier approach Javier Solana since he was someone who understood Latin America and could get the EU to focus more on the problem of press freedom in Venezuela. Aguirre